

HCS HB 539 -- IMMUNITY FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Lynch

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness by a vote of 8 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on State and Local Governments by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill specifies that an individual who, in good faith, seeks medical assistance for someone who is experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose or other medical emergency, including seeking assistance for himself or herself in these instances, or if the individual is the subject of a good faith request must not be arrested, charged, prosecuted, convicted, or have his or her property subject to civil forfeiture or otherwise be penalized for certain specified offenses if the evidence for the arrest, charge, prosecution conviction, seizure, or penalty was gained as a result of seeking medical assistance.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill provides immunity to those that seek medical attention for individuals experiencing a drug-related overdose. Due to fear of prosecution, people are not calling the police and are relocating overdose victims. Law enforcement officers wouldn't prosecute in practice, but the law needs to convince others that they won't be prosecuted for seeking medical attention.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lynch; Chad Sabora; Ronald Long; Kathi Arbin; and Missouri Association For Social Welfare.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.